

T Transportation Committee

For the Metropolitan Council meeting of December 14,
2011

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: November 30, 2011
Prepared:
Subject: 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Requests for MVTA SP#TRS-MVTA-11: I-35W Transit Limited Express Service and Technology and for new Cedar Avenue BRT Station-to-Station Service (TAB Action 2011-65)

Proposed Action:

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to change the scope of SP#TRS-MVTA-11: I-35W Transit Service and Technology by removing bus purchases, a facility lease and bus shoulder improvements and applying the freed-up funds to a new project for Cedar Bus Rapid Transit Station-to-Station start-up operating funds for three years.

Summary of Committee Discussion / Questions:

James Andrew presented the action of the Transportation Advisory Board. Arlene McCarthy recognized the work of MTS and MVTA staff, particularly Amy Vennewitz and Beverley Miller, in working out this solution. Chair Elkins said he was thankful for the flexibility of the Transportation Advisory Board in supporting this proposal and allowing an exception to TAB's funding allocation policy.

T Transportation Committee

Meeting date: November 28, 2011

Council meeting date: December 14, 2011

ADVISORY INFORMATION

Date: November 17, 2011
Subject: 2012-2015 TIP Amendment Requests for MVTA SP#TRS-MVTA-11: I-35W Transit Limited Express Service and Technology and for new Cedar Avenue BRT Station-to-Station Service (TAB Action 2011-65)
District(s), Member(s): Chávez - 15, Wulff- 16, Elkins - 5, Duininck - 8
Policy/Legal Reference: TAB Action
Staff Prepared/Presented: Arlene McCarthy, Director (651-602-1754)
Amy Vennewitz, Dep. Dir. Finance & Planning (651-602-1058)
Kevin Roggenbuck, TAB Coordinator (651-602-1728)
James Andrew, Senior Planner (651-602-1721)
Division/Department: Metropolitan Transportation Services

Proposed Action

That the Metropolitan Council concur with the Transportation Advisory Board (TAB) action to amend the 2012-2015 Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) to change the scope of SP#TRS-MVTA-11: I-35W Transit Service and Technology by removing bus purchases, a facility lease and bus shoulder improvements and applying the freed-up funds to a new project for Cedar Bus Rapid Transit Station-to-Station start-up operating funds for three years.

Background

The Cedar Avenue BRT station-to-station service is planned to start operations as early as November 2012. This recommendation provides operating funds for the first three years of that service.

This request involves reducing the funding for an existing CMAQ grant for I-35W limited stop and express transit service to include only the start-up operating costs and technology components of the project. The reduced scope project will use Regional Transit Capital funding as matching funds. Buses for the I-35W service, estimated at \$2,580,000, will instead be purchased through an existing Metropolitan Transportation Services CMAQ grant. The bus shoulder improvements and facility lease components of the project are no longer needed due to I-35W corridor investments made through the Urban Partnership Agreement and state trunk highway bonds. The freed-up CMAQ funding will be applied to a new project to provide three years of operating funds for Cedar Avenue BRT Station-to-Station service to be matched by Counties Transit Improvement Board (CTIB) funds.

MVTA also has a Cedar Avenue BRT CMAQ grant, awarded in 2005, for buses. When MVTA submitted the grant application for these buses, operating funds were not identified as it had been typical up to that point for regional operating expansion funds to be available. Because of recent budget shortfalls due to reduced state funding levels, there is currently no Council funding available to start-up station-to-station BRT service on the Cedar Avenue corridor. The action by the TAB takes unneeded funding from the I-35W

CMAQ project and applies it to a regional priority for operating funds for Cedar Avenue BRT Station-to-Station service.

The projects included in this TIP Amendment are:

<u>Project Description</u>	<u>CMAQ Funds</u>	<u>Local Match</u>	<u>Total</u>
1. I-35W PROJECT: Smaller total project amount for I-35W Express (Savage to downtown Minneapolis) and Limited Stop Service, Technology and Operating Costs for Three Years	\$1,361,338	\$550,000 (RTC)	\$1,911,338
2. NEW PROJECT: Cedar Ave BRT Station-to-Station Operating Costs for Three Years	\$3,239,806	\$3,809,094 (CTIB)	\$7,048,900

Rationale

The Transportation Advisory Board reviews and recommends changes in scope and allocations for Congestion Mitigation Air Quality (CMAQ) funding. These projects must be identified with the correct amounts and project descriptions in the current Transportation Improvement Program in order for them to be authorized to receive federal funding. The projects do not impact air quality, are consistent with the Transportation Policy Plan and do not affect fiscal constraint as they will use new and existing funding.

Funding

These projects are funded with a variety of funding sources. The federal funding source is CMAQ funding that was allocated by the region in 2005 and 2007 for these two projects. The I-35W project will be matched with Regional Transit Capital (RTC) funds and the bus purchases will be provided using an existing MTS CMAQ grant for regional bus purchases. The Cedar BRT station-to-station operating project will be funded using freed-up CMAQ funding from the original I-35W project and will be matched at 54% by CTIB. CTIB will fund 75% of the operating cost through June 2013, and 50% thereafter.

Known Support / Opposition

Although the TAB has adopted policies that prohibit reallocation of funds from one regionally-selected project to another, the Board acknowledged that the Cedar Avenue BRT Transitway is an important regional transportation project with \$112 million in capital investment that lacks operating funds. The actions taken by the TAB to recommend approval of the scope change and reallocate the available federal funds constitute an exception to those adopted policies. Because the nature of this request was not consistent with TAB policies, the technical committees did not recommend this action based on its technical review but acknowledged the benefits of this approach.